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1607/4848.

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF PORTLAND.

1607/4848.

AN EFFECTUAL AND PRACTICABLE PLAN OF DEFENCE AGAINST AN INVASION.

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PORTLAND.

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MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT MAYBOLE.

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TO

HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF PORTLAND.

May it pleaſe your Grace,

AT a time of ſuch eminent danger to the nation as the preſent is, any ſcheme of defence that may be ſuggeſted, and which is in any degree plauſible, will not fail to be attended to, whether, after examination, it ſhall be approved of or not, by a nobleman of ſuch great candour, and of ſuch truly patriotic principles as your Grace is well known to be. Whether the plan of national defence which I have here propoſed, ſhall be judged to be a proper or an improper one, it is ſuggeſted with a

good deſign, and the communication of it to your Grace proceeds from the moſt pure loyalty to my King, and from the union of admiration and love toward the Britiſh Conſtitution.

From the late attempt of the French to invade the kingdom of Ireland, and in which they were fruſtrated ſolely by the interpoſition of Almighty God in our behalf, and from the good reaſon which we have to believe that they are making preparations for future attempts of a ſimilar kind, it is high time that Britain ſhould endeavour to put herſelf into a better ſtate of defence than that in which ſhe is at preſent. Much has been done by Government with this view; but much ſtill needs to be done. Moſt of the counties in Scotland are at this moment in a very defenceleſs ſtate.

As the kingdom of France is extremely populous, as it is now become a kingdom of ſoldiers, whereby they have abundance of troops always at command, and as they are a moſt mercileſs and blood-thirſty people, it is time for Britain to awake, and to ſee her danger, and to provide againſt it. For, it is to be feared that our troops, eſpecially the

Fencible Regiments, both infantry and cavalry, from their not having ſeen ſervice, would not be a match for ſoldiers accuſtomed to fighting for many years, and whoſe native courage and experience in the art of war are aided by a frantic enthuſiaſm, and an implacable enmity to the Britiſh nation.

It is not improbable that the French may attempt to invade England, Scotland, and Ireland at one time, in order to divide the attention of our armaments both by ſea and land, and thereby to throw us into ſudden conſternation and total confuſion. If this ſhould be the caſe, it may be aſked, Are we now in a prepared ſtate for ſuch an emergency? We are ſo far from being prepared to meet ſuch an event, with a probability of overcoming in the conteſt, that a very few regiments of well diſciplined troops might burn all the towns in the South and Weſt coaſts of Scotland from Kirkcudbright to Greenock, and overrun the whole South-weſt part of Scotland, and deſtroy much property, and ſhed much blood of the loyal ſubjects before any effectual aſſiſtance could be given. In the caſe of an invaſion in Galloway, or Ayrſhire, there would alſo be an inundation of Iriſh democrates upon us, invited thither

by the proſpect of booty and plunder. And ſuppoſe that an invaſion ſhould, at the very ſame time, take place in England, from whence could we, who live in this part of Britain, procure aſſiſtance, as the troops who are in England would, in that caſe, have ſufficient employment without ſuccouring us? It would therefore appear to be neceſſary that ſome plan of more general and effectual defence ſhould be adopted at ſuch a critical and dangerous period as this is.

THERE is one mode of general defence, which appears to be rational and practicable, and which the preſent exigence requires to be adopted as ſpeedily as poſſible. Though ever ſo great a number of infantry, whether called Militia, Fencibles, or Volunteers were raiſed as they are inexperienced ſoldiers, they might not be able to cope with veteran troops. They are indeed of great uſe in keeping under the diſaffected in our own kingdom, and in giving time to our troops of the line to act. It is the effect of national prejudice to ſuppoſe that the Britiſh infantry are much ſuperiour to the ſoldiers on the Continent. But, it is an undeniable truth that the Britiſh cavalry are ſuperiour to the dragoons, in any other part of the world.

The Britiſh ſoldier ſhines as a horſeman, and our horſes are ſtronger, and better for a battle, than the horſes of any other nation.

THAT I may not be further tedious to your Grace, I propoſe that the farmers in every pariſh in Scotland, who uſually keep more than three horſes, ſhall, each, furniſh one man and a horſe to go to an appointed place of rendezvous in the pariſh, two days in the week, to be there taught the neceſſary movements, and military tactics.*

EVERY pariſh in Scotland could, at an average, furniſh one troop of cavalry conſiſting of fifty. Some pariſhes could eaſily furniſh two troops. I ſhall engage to find in my own pariſh two troops of as excellent cavalry as are in Europe, provided they were trained in the military exerciſes.

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* A farmer who has only four horſes can ſpare one of them from labour even in the ſpring; becauſe if his three remaining horſes are put into one plough, they will do leſs work than can be done by two horſe ploughs, only in the proportion of one fourth. Neighbouring farmers can alſo occaſionally act in fellowſhip. And when the ſowing comes on, three horſes will harrow the plowed land of a large farm.

As Scotland contains about nine hundred pariſhes, by each pariſh furniſhing even one troop of cavalry, we would have immediately in Scotland one hundred and fifty regiments of cavalry, conſiſting each of ſix troops. But as ſome pariſhes could eaſily furniſh two troops, and other pariſhes a troop and an half, and as there are many gentlemen of wealth living in the large towns and royal burghs of Scotland, who would willingly, at ſuch a time of neceſſity as this, furniſh, each, one man and a horſe, the computation may be juſtly made at two hundred regiments of volunteer cavalry, conſiſting of three hundred each, or of ſix troops, each troop conſiſting of fifty men, raiſed in Scotland in this way, that is, SIXTY THOUSAND Volunteer Dragoons, trained and mounted on horſes.

As there are thirty-three ſhires in Scotland, theſe troops divided equally among them, would allow to each ſhire above ſix regiments of volunteer cavalry for its protection. Theſe, joined to the regular and Fencible troops, which might be ſpared, and to the volunteer corps of infantry, would compoſe a great and ſolid force. In caſe of an intimation of the enemy appearing, they would be almoſt within a call of each other. They would line the

whole coaſts; and even the whole two hundred regiments could, in a ſhort time be aſſembled in one place.

TAKING England in its proportion to Scotland, either in reſpect of its extent of territory, or population, the number of regiments of volunteer cavalry which might be furniſhed in England by the ſame mode, is as ſeven to two. There are fifty-two counties in England and Wales, wherein ſeven hundred regiments of volunteer cavalry could be raiſed, in the ſame proportion of troops as in the pariſhes of Scotland. But, in England, beſides the fifty-two counties, including Wales, there are twenty-five large cities, many populous burghs, and eight cinque ports, in which, at a very moderate computation, one hundred regiments of volunteer cavalry could be raiſed, making in all, for England, eight hundred regiments of volunteer cavalry. Theſe, joined to the two hundred regiments in Scotland, would make up an army of one thouſand regiments of volunteer cavalry, or THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND Yeomanry Cavalry; a force which would bid defiance to all Europe in the event of their attempting to invade us. For, in the face of ſuch a powerful army, the enemy could not

get landing; or, though they could get on ſhore by ſtealth, or under the protection of cannon, they muſt all be cut off before they could have time to form themſelves into the order of battle. But even ſuppoſing that the enemy ſhould get a certain way into the country, they could not go from their camp, or entrenchments to forage, but in columns; and theſe muſt either be deſtroyed, or at leaſt be prevented from plundering in the face of ſuch a numerous body of cavalry.

Such is the plan of national defence which I beg leave humbly to propoſe to your Grace's conſideration. While this meaſure is rational and practicable, it would, at the ſame time, effectually anſwer the purpoſe for which it is intended.

I had ſome time ago, ſuggeſted this plan of national defence to ſome gentlemen of my acquaintance, and I had even propoſed to the farmers of my own pariſh to furniſh men and horſes for making up one or two troops of volunteer cavalry. The farmers in my own pariſh ſeem willing to furniſh men and horſes. But two objections are ſtarted againſt this mode of defence being made a general thing. The one objection is, that it would be ex-

tremely difficult to be put in execution; and the other is, that the execution of it would incur great expences.

But ſhall we ſtartle at difficulties, or expences, in a caſe wherein both our property and our lives are at ſtake? are any ſacrifices, of labour or of contribution too great to be made, for the ſake of ſaving our ALL? ſhall we not put ourſelves to the trouble of ſome great exertions for our own ſafety, and for the ſake of ſecuring the happineſs of the riſing generation, and of thoſe generations, our deſcendants, who are yet unborn? ſhall we not readily give up a part of our wealth to ſave the whole? Did our fore-fathers make great exertions and ſacrifices to found the Britiſh conſtitution, and to make us their deſcendants happy, and ſhall we make no ſacrifices to defend that conſtitution, and to keep ourſelves from falling under the yoke of the ſcum of the French nation.

I would aſk whether any other means of defence that can be propoſed, will not alſo be attended with difficulty? It will be granted that our preſent defence is inadequate, and that ſomething more muſt be done; and the only queſtion is, what is the leaſt difficult and moſt effectual, the leaſt expenſive and the

moſt expeditious plan of augmenting the ſtrength of the preſent military eſtabliſhment. We muſt expect to have to ſurmount great difficulties in every great enterpriſe and can a nation have a greater enterpriſe on hand, than that of preparing to put themſelves into ſuch a ſtate of defence as ſhall, by the help of God, keep them from becoming a conquered people, and from falling under the tyranny of Frenchmen, and the grim yoke of Atheiſts?

The difficulty of preparing ourſelves for the probable event of an invaſion, is a divided labour; and therefore it falls but light upon any one man, or ſet of men. It is a difficulty that is greater in the imagination, than it is in reality. If we ſhall ſet heartily about the execution of any proper plan of defence, the difficulty will gradually vaniſh. That which at firſt ſeemed a huge mountain will dwindle into a ſmall mole-hill. Muſt not even great difficulties appear to be but ſmall, when we contraſt them with the greatneſs of the object, which is that of preſerving all that is moſt dear to us, and of preventing all the miſeries and horrors inſeparable from our falling under the power of the French, though it were even but for a ſhort time?—For, if a French army once got footing in Britain, or in Ireland, the

conſequences would be dreadful, in [redacted] plunder and murder, and in [redacted] the blood of our brave ſoldiers, which would be ſhed in their gallant endeavours to defend us; but many of whom would fight with great diſadvantage againſt experienced troops of the line. Shall we eſteem any thing a difficulty that can prevent ſo many great and incalculable evils?

Some are of opinion that the training of the men and horſes, ſo as to render them fit for actual ſervice, is an utter impoſſibility. But, why ſhould it be thought a thing impoſſible?—It takes a conſiderable time to make cavalry quite perfect in their exerciſes and evolutions; but a leſs degree of tactical perfection would anſwer the purpoſe, in the caſe of volunteer or yeomanry cavalry, than in the caſe of thoſe dragoons and their horſes, who are expected to be oppoſed to experienced cavalry, and in a pitched battle. The volunteer cavalry would be chiefly employed in haraſſing the enemy, in cutting off convoys, in ſerving as flying artillery, and in keeping the diſorderly and the diſaffected in check, whereby the regular troops would not only receive occaſional aſſiſtance from them even in an engagement, but would be kept from

being diſturbed by the licentious banditti, who are glad to ſeize every opportunity that offers of committing riots, and of putting forth their hands to plunder.

The French and Auſtrian cavalry, who were brought into cloſe action and in the order of battle, have been often recruited during the courſe of this war. How were they trained ſo ſuddenly! why may not we be able to drill our Cavalry as perfectly and as quickly, as either the French or the Germans train theirs? The French in their late expedition againſt Ireland, ſent huſſars and cavalry accoutrements; but they ſent no horſes. They truſted to the farmer's horſes in Ireland to ſupply the dragoon's whom they embarked in that expedition. The horſes in Ireland which they intended to ride, are no better trained than ours. But, it will be ſaid, theſe horſes though untrained, were to be rode by experienced troopers, whoſe very art in riding gave them an advantage in bringing into action a ſet of untrained horſes. But, will not our Britiſh lads, with the advantage of having both themſelves and their horſes drilled for ſome time, be at leaſt on an equal footing with French huſſars mounted upon horſes who have got no training at all?

THE more perfectly that even volunteer cavalry ſhall be trained, ſo much the better: But, I ſhould think that, if the horſemen are once taught to ſit firm, and to move in a body; and to fire their carabines ſo as not to hurt one another; and if the horſes are brought to know the bridles and to ſtand the beating of drums, and the noiſe of muſquetry and cannon, they would be of great ſervice, even with that degree of drilling, in the caſe of an invaſion.

THE ſecond objection to be obviated in regard to the execution of the foregoing plan, is the great expence which will be thereby incurred. I hope to be able to ſhew that the expence of this armament would not be ſo great as is imagined, and that it would be ultimately even a great ſaving to the nation.

I propoſe that the expence of the execution of this plan of defence ſhall be divided among three claſſes, to wit, the farmers, the heritors, and government. The farmers ſhould provide the men and their horſes, without any expence to government in giving them pay. The gentlemen farmers ought not to be averſe from this, becauſe they, next to the proprietors of land, are moſt intereſted in repelling an inva-

ſion. The heritors ſhould pay for clothing to the troopers, and alſo provide ſaddles and bridles for the horſes. And government ſhould be at the expence of drilling them, and of furniſhing the men with arms; or perhaps, government may be relieved altogether, as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

THE expence to the farmer, by loſing the labour of one ſervant, and one horſe for a part of two days in the week, can at moſt, be computed at two ſhillings a day. This is four ſhillings in the week, or ſixteen ſhillings in the month, or two pounds, eighteen ſhillings ſterling for three months. After three months drilling, the ſervant and the horſe might be called out but ſeldom. * I would indeed have the volunteer cavalry of each county to be reviewed at the head town of the county once a month, by a proper dragoon officer, for the ſpace of four months, that is, reviewed four times. Suppoſe the drilling of the cavalry

* From a converſation which I had this day, with a dragoon officer who ſerved with the Britiſh troops in Germany the two or three preceding years, I underſtand that the horſes could be drilled in much leſs time than three months. He ſays that they might be made fit for ſervice in one month,

ſhould be continued for the ſpace of four months, the whole amount of what the farmer could compute his expence is not above five pounds ſterling; for the by-work which both the ſervant and horſe could do, would defray the expence of their maintenance. And would the gentlemen farmers, who have ſo much at ſtake in caſe of an invaſion, ſcruple to be at ſuch a trifling expence, in order to render their property and their lives ſecure? The farmer's property is the firſt object of plunder by an enemy, the very driving of their cattle to the diſtance of ſeveral miles from their own paſture, which would be neceſſary if the enemy attempted to land, would ſubject them to a greater loſs, than that of furniſhing, each, a man and an horſe to be drilled two days in the week. And I know that there will be no difficulty in getting their ſervants to conſent to employ themſelves in this ſervice; for the young men who are ſervants to the farmers, are the moſt uncorrupted and loyal, and ſpirited part of the community: and they know that they will be more ſafe by being dragoons, than mere ſervants; becauſe, if an invaſion ſhould happen, they will be all called out to defend their country, at any rate.

The expence of this armament would coſt

the heritors about ſix pounds, and ten ſhillings ſterling for each volunteer dragoon, that is, three hundred and twenty five pounds for providing clothing, and ſaddles, and bridles for each troop. What heritor would be averſe from purchaſing his ſafety at ſuch a cheap rate? If the enemy were to be in the country but for one week, the heritors for many miles round, would ſuffer much greater loſs in the burning of their houſes, or by the plunder of their cattle, than that which will be incurred by this trifling expence; and from which, if this plan is adopted as a general thing, I maintain that, under God, they will be ſafe.

As I am not a profeſſional man, I cannot calculate, with exactneſs, what the drilling of the men and horſes, and the providing the men in arms, would coſt government. But every dragoon officer knows what this would amount to. As government is, at any rate, paying for riding-maſters, and for drilling ſerjeants, the expence incurred by furniſhing them would be the leſs. And, as there is a claſs of people who, by this plan, would be incurring no expence for this armament, ſuch as the wealthy citizens of large towns; would there be any harm in making them be at the

expence of paying for riding-maſters and drilling ſerjeants, and for arms to the Cavalry, whereby government would be put to no expence whatever, on account of the foregoing number of volunteer cavalry? though that plan, if it were gone into, would be the ſtrongeſt human bulwark that ever was raiſed for the protection of Britain, and Ireland; for I mean that the meaſure ſhould be adopted in relation to Ireland as well as Great Britain. This would be as powerful a force in cavalry as is at preſent in all Europe.

The expence of executing the foregoing plan, it may now be ſeen, is a mere trifle, when the object is conſidered. The loſs which any one county in Great Britain would ſuſtain, in the ſpace of two days, by an army of twenty or thirty thouſand French ſoldiers going through it, would be far greater than all the expence which that county would incur by the farmers, each, providing a horſeman and a charger, and by the heritors furniſhing the men's clothing, and ſaddles and bridles for the horſes.

I contend that the adoption of this plan, inſtead of creating inſupportable expences to the lieges and to government, would be a

great ſaving to both. It would be a great ſaving to the ſubjects, becauſe it may, perhaps, be a part of the French policy to keep us in a conſtant alarm from the apprehenſion of an invaſion, and the fear of an invaſion is the ruin of induſtry. The conſtant terror of an invaſion, eſpecially while we are unprepared to repel it, not only makes the weak and timid unhappy, but it creates an almoſt total ſtagnation of buſineſs. It ſets tradeſmen and labourers idle, it diſheartens the manufacturer, whereby he does not employ his uſual number of workmen; it prevents the market-prices of certain articles from flowing in their natural channel; it deſtroys confidence in bank credit, and it ſets men idle from their love of news, and from their curioſity to know what the enemy is doing for the purpoſe of invading them, and what ſteps their own government are taking, in order to protect them. The loſs to induſtry by ſuch a diſtracted ſtate of men's minds is incalculable.

But, by having ſuch an army of cavalry ready, and at hand, as is here propoſed, all the bad effects of alarm are prevented. It would give ſuch an idea of ſecurity under God, that every man's mind would be eaſy, and every claſs of ſubjects would attend to

their own buſineſs in quietneſs and peace. Induſtry, trade, and manufactures, would go on as uſual, from the confidence of ſecurity and protection, and every thing would flow in its natural channel. By encouraging induſtry in all the different branches of manufactures and of farming, and by preventing that ſtagnation of buſineſs, which is always the effect of the alarm of an invaſion, government is alſo benefited: for the revenue paid to government is thereby increaſed, becauſe the means both of the manufacture and conſumption of thoſe articles from which revenue ariſes would, in that caſe, be afforded. Therefore, the having a great and formidable army at ſuch a time as this, is ſo far from being a loſs to the nation, that, on the contrary, it is the means of encreaſing the national wealth. While it prevents the poſſibility of our being conquered or plundered, it at the ſame time calms the public mind, and allows every man to do his own work, and to mind his own lawful affairs. As it is needful to have always ſuch a ſtanding army, as is adequate to the keeping the peace of the country, and to the repelling of unforeſeen aggreſſion, ſo it is needful to augment the army in a degree proportionable to the encreaſe of danger.

FRANCE being now a nation of ſoldiers, and being ſeparated from us only by a narrow ſea, we cannot be ſafe without having a large army of warriors, as well as a powerful navy. The wooden walls of Britain are a juſt ground of our pride and boaſt. But adverſe winds may keep our fleet in port for a conſiderable time, while a fleet can come out of Breſt harbour with almoſt any wind. A ſtorm may ſcatter our fleet after it is got to ſea, in order to prevent the landing of the troops who are ſent to invade us. Various diſaſters may happen to the fleet on the watry element, whereby Britain or Ireland may be invaded, in ſpite of the efforts of our navy. An Admiral may, by chance, be advanced to the command of the channel-fleet, who ſhall not do his duty, and who ſhall prefer the gratification of his own ill-humour, or who is ſordid, or capricious, whereby he prefers the indulgence of ſome low paſſion to the immortal glory which he would acquire, by defeating the enemy, and ſaving his country. So long as we ſhall truſt wholly to our channel-fleet, it ſhould be conſidered, that we repoſe the ſafety of the whole nation in the hands of one man, that is, in the Admiral. I have often thought that this is unſafe. For, though moſt of our Admirals have hitherto done their duty, becauſe they

were men of honour, yet it is not impoſſible that it may happen, that the command of our channel-fleet may be given to a man, who is weak in underſtanding, or who is capricious, or who is covetous of money, or who, to gratify his reſentment againſt one or more of his Majeſty's miniſters, may, by his breach of ſuch an awful truſt, wherein the lives and property of millions of Britiſh ſubjects are involved, be willing to betray his king and his country, and, by the commiſſion of ſuch a heinous ſin, to expoſe himſelf to the danger of "hell-fire." I do not ſay, that this will certainly happen, but only that it is a poſſible event.

MOREOVER, though our Admiral ſhould be ever ſo faithful, gallant, and active, yet, as the ſea is a long and broad way, he may not fall in with the enemy's fleet either in its way to us or in its return. The late expedition of the French againſt Ireland has ſhewn, not only that the French intend to invade us, but alſo that we may be more ſuddenly and unexpectedly invaded, than we had imagined. Unleſs it had pleaſed God to blow with his wind, and to ſcatter their fleet, the French army would have landed, and occaſioned much diſaſter and much bloodſhed in

Ireland. That expedition has alſo proved that it is poſſible for the French fleet to eſcape the vigilance of ours, even when its tract may, within a few leagues, be gueſſed at.

THEREFORE, our ſafety, under God, depends upon the union of a powerful fleet and and a great army. We muſt have ſome internal reſources, in a criſis of danger like this, beſides the ſecurity derived from our fleet. Neither our fleet alone, nor even the union of our fleet and infantry regiments without cavalry, is ſufficient to give us full ſecurity. But, if the number of volunteer cavalry I have mentioned, is added to the military eſtabliſhment which we are already poſſeſſed of, Britain will be invincible, unleſs God himſelf ſhall have determined upon our overthrow: By doing this, we will draw a line of circumvallation around us, which all the enthuſiaſm and ſtratagem, and numbers of the French ſoldiers will not be able to penetrate. This, with the countenance of Jehovah, will be to us like the munition of rocks, and a ſtrong-hold, from which the united ſkill and ſtrength of all our enemy's will be unable to diſlodge us.

If any thing is done in the way which I propoſe, it ought to be done immediately.

Why ſhould we delay the putting ourſelves into ſuch a ſtate of defence, as may render us ſafe, and as may keep our minds eaſy, ſince God has put the full means of ſelf-defence into our power? Shall we diſcover ſo little of the ſpirit of our anceſtors, as to allow ourſelves to fall into the cruel hands of the French, without even making any degree of manly reſiſtance, which muſt be the caſe, if they ſhall come upon us while we are unprepared, and ſhall find us ſleeping. What a ſudden change has taken place in the minds of Britons in regard to their averſion to French principles, and eſpecially in regard to their ſyſtem of religion, while they profeſſed any religion. Great was the diſlike which the people of this iſland had a few years ago, to the French, becauſe they were Papiſts; and ſhall we now have no fear of receiving them as brethren, becauſe they are become Atheiſts? Aſk the people in the Netherlands, who invited the French to come among them, how they now reliſh the French avarice, tyranny, and murder? They are now making attempts, when it is perhaps too late, to throw off a yoke, which they are not able to bear; but which themſelves voluntarily wreathed about their own necks, by preferring Gallick domi-

nation and ferocity to the mild government of their own amiable ſovereign.

If the French ſhall once get footing on this rich and beautiful iſland, they will put many of it's native inhabitants to the ſword, and they will render others ſo unhappy, that they will be glad to ſeek deliverance from their ſtate of bondage and tyranny, in ſome foreign country. In the ſpace of a few years, the whole preſent inhabitants of Britain would be extirpated. Even thoſe infatuated democrates, who wiſh to ſee the French among us, would be among the firſt who would become victims to that change of Government which they ſo earneſtly deſire. In every revolution in a ſtate, the authors of that revolution are commonly the firſt who ſuffer by it. If the French ſhould invade us, and become maſters of the country for ſome time, they would immediately put to death the diſloyal ſubjects of Britain, and it's traitors, from knowing that, if theſe men have been traiterous to the moſt virtuous king who ever lived, as is the preſent king of great Britain, and to the beſt ſyſtem of human ſociety that ever was formed, as is the Britiſh conſtitution, they would not fail to rebel againſt tyrants, as are the members of the French convention and executive

directory, and againſt a form of government wherein the law has no force, as is the caſe with the French motely ſyſtem of juriſprudence. What bond of fraternity could ly between us and a people, whoſe language we do not underſtand, whoſe cuſtoms and manners are different from ours; a people, whoſe want of faith has been, for centuries, proverbial, who have no religion to curb their ferocity, and who, from hatred to us, take pleaſure in ſlaying us?

If Britons will not be rouſed, in this hour of danger, either from a regard to the fruits of their own and of their father's induſtry, or for the ſake of preſerving their lives; has a veneration for their civil and religious inſtitutions, thoſe great works of God among us, and thoſe grand monuments of the valour, and wiſdom, and piety of their anceſtors no influence upon them? Shall we give up all thoſe glorious privileges and bleſſings for which our forefathers fought and died, (with as much indolence and cowardice, as the degenerated Italians have allowed the worksof their celebrated artiſts,) as well as our own liberty, to become a prey to the rapacious hands of Paris-ſtreet robbers, headed by a ſoldier of fortune.

Shall not Britons now anticipate the tears

and lamentations of their wives and daughters, ſhed at the ſight of the poignards, the inſults, and brutality of the French ſoldiers, or rather, of French colliers, miners, and malefactors taken from the jails, of whom their army is now moſtly compoſed? The enlightened, the well educated, and brave inhabitants of this iſland, will not ſurely be ſo regardleſs of their own feelings, and ſo inſenſible to the reproaches and condemnation of all Europe, and of all the world, as not to rouſe and arm themſelves, from the feeling of indignation at the thought of ſubmitting to the French yoke, without having firſt uſed every exertion to which courage, and activity, and patriotiſm, and domeſtic ſenſibilities could prompt them.

Those who conſider this matter coolly, and who reflect upon the uncertain fortune and contingencies of war, and the poſſible conſequences of an invaſion by a foreign enemy, will anticipate the evils that may be coming upon them. They will anticipate the lamentations of their ſons, who, inſtead of reaping the fruits of the induſtry of their fathers, and of enjoying that inheritance which they had laid up for them, may, if we are ſupine at this critical period, be deſtined to ſuffer all the calamities inſeparable from our country

being plundered and deſolated by the French, as other countries have been ſince the commencement of this bloody war. The babe on its mother's knee, if it could ſpeak, would beſeech its father and its relations to provide againſt this certainly intended invaſion, and to fruſtrate by all poſſible means, the deſigns of our ambitious and mercileſs foe, who has long hugged the fond idea, and which he does at preſent more than ever, of rendering Britain his conquered province. But Britons are not ſo ſlothful, and ſo regardleſs of the danger which threatens them, as not to prefer the taking up arms, and defending thoſe bleſſings and poſſeſſions by which God has made them the happieſt nation in the world, to the allowing their houſes and their cities to be laid waſte, their riches to be taken from them by violence, and themſelves and their children inſulted and murdered in cold blood. The eyes of all Europe, nay, of all the world, are now upon us; and therefore let us act in a manner worthy of that great character for wiſdom and valour which we have always, hitherto maintained among other nations. The peaceable ſtate of our colonies abroad depend upon the degree of activity and valour which we ſhall ſhew upon this occaſion.

I hope that, as the Parliament is now met, ſuch patriotic ſpeeches will be delivered there, and ſuch ſpirited meaſures adopted, as will rouſe the people of Britain, and make them willing to forego a part of their wealth, in order to ſave the whole. As this is a conteſt in which Chriſtians are fighting againſt Infidels, and a virtuous people againſt Atheiſts, if we humble ourſelves before God, and devoutly implore his aſſiſtance, he will ſtretch forth his hand, and ſave us.

But, as it is wrong and ſinful to depend wholly upon human wiſdom and valour alone, without the counſel and help of Almighty God, ſo it is equally wrong not to uſe thoſe gifts, and faculties, and means of exertion which God has put in our own power; without the doing of which we cannot expect that he will turn the battle from our gate. It is commonly ſaid that the ſword of the Lord, and not that of man, muſt ſave us. Our truſt muſt be in the Lord of Hoſts; for without his help, all our own endeavours will be vain. But, at the ſame time, unleſs we uſe thoſe means of ſaving ourſelves which he has put in our own power, and which he commands us to uſe, we cannot expect to receive his aſſiſtance; becauſe, by neglecting to uſe

the means which he has put in our power, we are in that very caſe ſinning againſt him. Though the fruits of harveſt are altogether of God's giving, yet does any man expect to reap, who does not plow and ſow?

As God hates the ſluggard, and puniſhes him with poverty, becauſe he is a ſluggard, ſo he bleſſes the hand of the diligent man, and bleſſes him with riches as the conſtituted reward of his diligence. St. Paul, during a ſtorm in his voyage to Rome, though he had told the whole people aboard the veſſel, that the angel of the Lord had appeared to him that night, and had aſſured him that he and all thoſe who were with him in the ſhip would be ſaved, yet, immediately after that, when the ſeamen were about to flee out of the ſhip, ſaid to the Centurion, and to the ſoldiers, "Ex-"cept theſe" ſailors, who only know the proper method of managing the ſhip, "ſhall "abide in the veſſel, ye cannot be ſaved." This is a good ſcripture authority for proving that, while it is our duty to put our truſt in Almighty God who is the great efficient cauſe of all our bleſſings and deliverances, it is alſo our duty to uſe the neceſſary means of our ſelf-preſervation, and of our receiving the good things which we ſtand in need of. The

argument which I found upon this reaſoning is, that it is our duty to do what we can to provide againſt whatever our enemies may attempt to do us: and then, and not till then, may we expect that God will give us the victory over our enemies. Then we ſhall have good reaſon to expect that he will make us able not only to repel the attacks of our enemy, but even to make us the inſtruments of puniſhing a nation, who are the ſcourge of Europe, who aim at the general overthrow of liberty and of all ſyſtems of civil ſociety, and who ſtrive to baniſh all order, and virtue, and religion from the world.

Upon the authority of this great inſpired apoſtle, I may tell the people of Britain and Ireland, that ſince formidable preparations are juſt now making all along the coaſts of France to invade us, unleſs they will uſe the natural and lawful means of ſelf-defence, they cannot be ſaved from being invaded, and plundered, and maſſacred; My heart bleeds at the forethought of the number of brave foot fencibles and volunteers, who would, in the exerciſe of their courage, be ſlain by Ruſſians, who enjoy the advantage of having been in actual ſervice, unleſs the farmers who have more at ſtake than any other part of the community, will

now come forward, and contribute both in men and horſes toward their own and their country's defence. The tradeſmens tools, and and the manufacturer's machines are but ſmall ſpoil for the invading enemy, in compariſon of the farmer's ſtack-yards, and granaries, and cattle of all ſorts. And if the tradeſmen, the merchants, and private gentlemen in the cities have ſhewn a laudable zeal in learning the uſe of fire arms, in order to protect the farmers as well as themſelves, why ſhould not the farmers, from a ſenſe of reciprocal juſtice, as well as of mutual defence, contribute their ſhare alſo toward the general ſafety, by getting a part of their families and of their horſes trained to become helpful in repelling the common foe?

The Britiſh conſtitution is a bulwark of rational liberty, and of the ſecurity of life and property, in which God has given us our ſtation, and which he has commanded us to defend. If, therefore, we ſhall make no preparations, when it is threatened to be attacked by a powerful and ferocious enemy; or, if we ſhall tamely ſurrender it, from indulging ſloth or indolence, or by allowing ourſelves to be lulled into a falſe and dangerous ſecurity, we ſin greatly againſt our heavenly benefactor, and

ſhew ourſelves unworthy of thoſe peculiar favours which he has beſtowed upon us. We ſhall thereby expoſe ourſelves to a meaſure of his wrath which is proportionable to our cowardice and ingratitude, and to our faithleſsneſs in the diſcharge of that ſolemn truſt which he has repoſed in us.

Theſe obſervations may ſerve as an anſwer to thoſe deluded men, who are either themſelves blind to the nature of duty, and deaf to the preſent ſummons of Heaven to put themſelves into a ſtate of defence, or who, through deſign, miſlead others, and huſh them faſt aſleep on the brink of a precipice, by ſaying that we ought to put our truſt in God, that he will do the work for us, if he intends to ſave us; and that we ought to put no truſt in an arm of fleſh. Such men may as well ſay that we may ly in our beds both day and night, and that they will, nevertheleſs, have their houſes built for them, and be fed and clothed, and have their ſheep and oxen led to paſture and to the water, by a ſupernatural hand; and that though they neither plow nor ſow, they will, nevertheleſs, have a plentiful harveſt. Has not God given underſtanding to man, and has he not given him a body fitted for labour and for ſelf-defence? are not theſe the gifts of

God? and were they not given to be uſed by us? Let the people uſe theſe means of their defence; and let them pray for God's bleſſing upon their own endeavours, and then they may expect that he will ſave them. But, if they will do nothing for themſelves, they may expect that God will moſt aſſuredly deliver them into the hands of their enemies, as the juſt puniſhment of their ſloth and effeminancy, of their bigotry and falſe ſecurity.

Though the gentlemen-farmers form an eſſential part of the ſtrength and riches of the nation, and occupy the middle ſtation between the heritors, and the lower claſſes of the people, they are, nevertheleſs, doing nothing in this preſent exigency of the ſtate; at leaſt, they are doing leſs than the other claſſes of the community. The gentlemen, and the tradeſmen, and the manufacturers in towns have generouſly come forth, and offered their ſervices to government: and why ſhould poor tradeſmen make a conſiderable ſacrifice to protect the farmers while they themſelves do nothing to defend that country and that government, under the laws of which they live ſecurely and happily, and are now become the richeſt part of the community?

One objection which the farmers make to their coming forward upon this occaſion, is, that they already pay heavy taxes to government, in ceſs, tiend, and road-money. In anſwer to this, I ſay, what is not commonly underſtood, at leaſt by the farmers, that the farmers pay no taxes whatever, except what they pay in the articles of conſumption along with their other fellow-ſubjects. All the other taxes which they pay, are a part of the yearly rent of ther farms. Unleſs they paid ceſs, and tiend, and road-money, their landlords would oblige them to pay a proportional greater rent.

Another objection which the farmers make to arming themſelves, is, that this is the ſeaſon of their agricultural labour, and that they cannot ſpare either a ſervant or a horſe to be drilled for military uſe. The anſwer to this is, that, if the enemy ſhall come upon us immediately, or in ſix weeks after this, they will not, perhaps, get their lands ſowed at all: or, though they ſhould ſow them, the French may reap their crop. Beſides, in this moment of neceſſity and danger, they can, without much delay in the progreſs of their agriculture, take and give with their neighbour farmers: and by this

ſort of fellowſhip, which is very common, the want of one man and one horſe, for four or ſix hours in the week, cannot be materially felt.

A third objection which the farmers make, is, that they will not be able to perſuade their ſervants to become ſoldiers. I will undertake, in my own pariſh at leaſt, to take all the young men ſerving farmers into my own hands as to this particular. I ſhall engage to get as many ſtout young country lads as will be willing, and even glad, to mount two troops of horſe of fifty each. In any pariſh in Scotland, if the maſter farmers ſhould refuſe to furniſh one man, and one horſe, I am perſuaded that the ſervant-men themſelves will form one common purſe from their wages, and buy horſes, and, from among themſelves chooſe their riders, in order to make up the number of Yeomanry Volunteer Cavalry wanted in that pariſh. And, when the horſes come not to be needed in this way, Government, in reward of their ſpirit, will buy their horſes from them at a higher price than that which they themſelves paid for them. I know that the young men in the country would be proud to ſerve their King and their country in this time of common danger: and that they

are not ſo void of underſtanding, as not to prefer facing the enemy on horſeback, and trained to military movements, and in company with a whole army of dragoons, to the walking on foot with the undiſciplined maſs of the people, which would be the caſe, if the enemy ſhould invade us, while we are no better prepared to encounter them than we are at preſent.

FINALLY, it ſhould require but few recommendations, either from individuals, or even from his Majeſty's miniſter's, or from Parliament, to perſuade the people of great Britain and Ireland to arm themſelves at ſuch an awful criſis as this and to take upon themſelves ſome part of the expence neceſſary to provide againſt the dreadful deſigns of a barbarous and infuriated enemy. If the Parliament has already appropriated the funds with which they are entruſted by the nation to the uſual neceſſary purpoſes of maintaining the civil and military eſtabliſhments and demands of the ſtates, what can they do more, unleſs the ſubjects ſhall, in this preſſing exigency, and for the ſake of their own preſervation, come forward, and aſſiſt government by furniſhing both men and money. And why ſhould the people of Britain and Ireland

be backward in giving every aſſiſtance in their power, in order to ſave their all? They ought to aſſiſt Government the more readily and cheerfully, when it is conſidered, that, by the above armament, the nation, through the bleſſing of God, will be in a ſtate of perfect ſecurity, in ſpite of all the rancour, and exertions, and enthuſiaſm of the enemy; and every man will be at liberty to mind his own work, and the duties of his own vocation, in peace of mind, whereby that deplorable ſtagnation of buſineſs, which is already beginning to ſhew its ghaſtly front, will be happily prevented. Should an invaſion take place, then the farmers, and all their ſervant-men, would be obliged to turn out in their own defence, and in that of their country. Is it not better to provide againſt this neceſſity, by furniſhing one man and one horſe, whereby all the reſt, could quietly follow their agricultural buſineſs? And as ſoon as that one man and horſe are drilled, they too will return to their former work. The ſooner they are drilled the better; for, when the enemy is upon the coaſt, it will not then be time to ſet about learning the military exerciſes, and bringing arms and ammunition from a great diſtance.

The ſtrong deſire which I have ſhewn of

having a large army of Volunteer Cavalry, is not only for rendering us completely ſuperior to any force the enemy can bring againſt us, but alſo for the ſake of ſaving the lives of our brave foot ſoldiers. The Fencible regiments, and the ſeveral bodies of Volunteer Infantry have ſhewn a moſt laudable patriotic ſpirit: and I am perſuaded that, if they ſhould be called to action, they would acquit themſelves moſt honourably. But, as I obſerved before, ſince they have not yet ſeen any military ſervice, their very native courage would put them in danger of ſuffering greatly in a pitched battle with veteran troops, unleſs they were aided by a powerful body of cavalry. And that, as I have ſhewn, may be had without diſtreſſing the ſubjects, and even without any expence to government, except in ordinance ſtores and ammunition!

It may perhaps, be thought preſumption in me to addreſs your Grace on a ſubject which is not in the line of my own profeſſion. But, as Scotland at leaſt is in a very defenceleſs ſtate, and as I ſee nothing going on in the way of providing againſt an invaſion, except the augmenting of the number of the Volunteer Infantry, I found myſelf conſtrained to propoſe the foregoing plan of national defence, which,

appears to me to be one that is rational, and practicable, expeditiouſly executed, and moſt effectual for the purpoſe of giving us perfect ſecurity.

I had ſuggeſted this plan, a good while ago, to ſome of my friends; and I had even wrote to ſeveral gentlemen of my acquaintance in different parts of Scotland, aſking their opinion of it. And though none of them altogether diſapproved of it, yet they were all ſo apprehenſive of the difficulty of putting it in execution, that I was diſcouraged from publiſhing it till now. And I have now preſumed to propoſe it to your Grace, becauſe I do not ſee any ſcheme of effectual defence adopted. In whatever light what I have ſaid may be viewed, I can aſſure your Grace that I have wrote this, perhaps, too tedious letter, from the beſt intention.

I am,

May it pleaſe your Grace,

With ſentiments of great eſteem,

Your Grace's moſt reſpectful,

Humble ſervant,

JAMES WRIGHT.

MAYBOLE, FEB. 16th. 1797.

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